DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 379 658 CS 214 728

TITLE	A Manual of Style.
INSTITUTION	Nebraska State Dept. of Education, Lincoln.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	63p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Desktop Publishing; Editing; *Expository Writing; Guidelines; *Language Usage; *Letters (Correspondence); Proofreading; Staff Meetings; Technical Writing; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	Style Manuals; Stylistics

ABSTRACT

This "Manual of Style" is offered as a guide to assist Nebraska State employees in producing quality written communications and in presenting a consistently professional image of government documents. The manual is not designed to be all-inclusive. Sections of the manual discuss formatting documents, memorandums, letters, mailing procedures, reports, news releases, writing for special purposes, state board of education meetings, standards of style, department procedures, records management, and desktop publishing. Lists of acronyms, proofreader's marks, and two-letter state abbreviations are attached. (RS)

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ED 379 658

A Manual of Style

1992

Nebraska Department of Education

CS214728

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Purpose

The Department of Education *Manual of Style* is offered as a guide to assist employees in producing quality written communications and in presenting a consistently professional image of our Department.

This manual is not intended to be all-inclusive. Other reference manuals should be consulted as additional resources.

Table of Contents

Page

Formatting Documents 1
- Checklist Before Keying 1
- Compose 2
- Proof and Polish 3

Memorandums 4

Letters 6
- Business Letter Parts 6
- Optional Business Letter Parts 9
- Business Letter Styles 11
- Placement of Letters 14
- Additional Pages 14
- Letters for the Commissioner's Signature 15
- Letters for the Governor's Signature 15
- Legislative, Media, and Citizen Inquiries and Contacts 15

Mailing Procedures 16
- Envelopes and Postcards 16
- Labels 17
- Bulk Mailings 17

Reports 18
- Style 18
- Organization 18
- Layout 19

News Releases 20

Writing for Special Purposes 21
- Data Collection and Reporting 21
- Rules 22
- Grants 22

State Board of Education Meetings 23
- State Board Meeting Materials 23
- Agenda Items 23
- Support Materials 23
- Cover Memo 24
- Presenting Before the Board 24

Standards of Style 26
- Capitalization 26
- Punctuation 29
- Numbers 34
- Word Demons 38
- Simplified Word Phrases 42
- Was It Something I Said? 45

Department Procedures 47
Telephone Etiquette 47
Receiving Visitors to the Department 48
Arranging for Meetings 48

Records Management 49

Desktop Publishing 50
Elements of Desktop Publishing 50

Acronyms 53

Proofreader's Marks 55

Two-Letter State Abbreviations 56

Formatting Documents

CHECKLIST BEFORE KEYING

1. Determine if a written reply is necessary.

   Not all business communication needs to be on paper. Ask yourself the following questions:

   - Is a written record needed?
   - Will you or someone else refer often to this record?
   - Will a phone call or short handwritten note be acceptable?
   - Is this the end of the trail?

   A written reply is unnecessary:

   - when mailing requested materials that need no explanation or interpretation. Do not write a memo that says no more than "attached is the attached." Include your business card and send the materials.
   - when responding to an in-house meeting invitation. Use the network electronic mail.
   - when responding to an outside meeting invitation. Use the telephone.

2. Choose font, margins, spacing, and style.

   a. Font

   Serif fonts (those having short lines or curves added to the ends of letter strokes) should be used for text. Serifs help connect one letter to the next without blur and aid the eye in spotting the shape of a word or phrase. They make it easier to read line after line and page after page of text. Examples of serif fonts:

   This is Times Roman.
   This is New Century Schoolbook.

   Sans serif fonts (characters without additions to ends of letter strokes) should be reserved for headings or larger than normal and smaller than normal size. An example of a sans serif font:

   This is Helvetica.

   No more than two fonts should be used in the same document. Too much variation gives the text a cluttered appearance.

b. Margins

Standard text should have a justified left margin and a ragged right margin. Reading is easier and faster with a ragged right margin. Both margins may be justified if text is in narrow columns (three per page). Hyphenation should not be used except in extreme instances. Generally, a one-inch margin on all sides is acceptable. Adjustments may need to be made for various types of letterhead or documents.

c. Spacing

Determine the proper spacing for the document. Letters and memorandums require single spacing, while most reports require double spacing. There should be a proper amount of "white space" to make the document attractive.

d. Style

Determine the appropriate style for the document. There are several options for letters—block, modified block, or Simplified Administrative Management Style (AMS). Newsletters also have several different styles from which to choose. Setting up a style library before keying the document will assure that all headings and subheadings are consistent throughout the document.

3. Organize thoughts and gather materials.

a. Keep your hands off the keyboard for a minute. Think about what you want to say. Hold a quick conversation in your head before you start to compose.

b. If your ideas are intricate and lengthy, make an outline to keep like thoughts together.

c. If you need statistics or other supporting documentation, organize them before you start to write. Don't risk breaking the creative flow because you have to dig for background information.

COMPOSE

> *Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.*
>
> *The Elements of Style*
> William Strunk Jr.

1. Get to the point. You are not writing the great American novel. If you discover you can reduce your document to fewer than three sentences, read the previous "Checklist Before Keying."

2. Be specific. Do not use slang, cliches, worn-out phrases, excessively technical language, or generalizations. Written business communication should be concise. Let your ideas stand on their own power. Don't hide them behind flowery language and contrived phrases.

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3. Use the active voice. Passive verbs are evasive and unnatural.

Passive voice: *The meeting was believed to be boring by all.*
Active voice: *We all believed the meeting was boring.*

4. Use positive language. Tell the reader what it *is*, not what it *is not*.

Negative: *She did not think the report was spicy.*
Positive: *She thought the report was bland.*

5. Avoid conditionals. *Would, should, could, can, may, rather, somewhat,* and other conditionals give the reader a feeling of uncertainty. Tentative writing sounds insecure. Be bold!

Tentative: *If you would let me know how many copies should be made, I could make them for you.*
Sure: *If you let me know how many copies are needed, I will make them.*

6. Use conversational transitions. The simplest connectors are used routinely in conversation. They are also the best connectors in writing.

Formal	**Simple**
likewise	and
in addition	also
moreover	now; next
nevertheless	but
for this reason	so

7. Avoid using acronyms whenever possible. When it is necessary to use an acronym, be certain to spell it out the first time it is used in the document.

PROOF AND POLISH

1. Scan document on screen for obvious errors. Use electronic spell check.

2. Print and read paper copy for the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

3. Read for content and clarity.

4. Have someone else read the document. Did you say what you wanted to say? Ask the reader to paraphrase the document.

5. Do a visual check. Is there enough white space on the page? Is the document pleasing to the eye?

Memorandums

Letters sent to individuals within the same company or organization are often keyed as interoffice memorandums. Many memos within the Department of Education may be sent by electronic mail with hard copy retention for the file, if necessary. Memos can also be sent to individuals outside an organization; however, memos are often referred to as "informal" communication.

Memorandums are often keyed on plain paper, but they can be printed on letterhead as well. The headings *TO, FROM, DATE,* and *SUBJECT (or RE)* usually begin the memorandum. The heading information can be single- or double-spaced. The subject line may or may not be capitalized. Do not use complimentary close or signature lines. The writer often signs his or her initials or name next to the printed name in the heading. Reference initials, enclosure notations, and copy notations remain the same as in business letters.

Memos should always be typed in the block format with a minimum of one-inch margins. All text should be single spaced, with double spacing between paragraphs. Typing the word *Memorandum* at the top of the memo is unnecessary.

Within the heading information, it is attractive to align the information at a designated tab. Note the following example:

TO: *George Jones*
FROM: *Pierce Hall*
DATE: *November 30, 19xx*
RE: *Memorandum Format*

Double- or triple-space after the subject line and begin keying the body of the memo.

On the following page is an example of an acceptable memo format.

SAMPLE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Department Staff Members
FROM: James Tye, Office Manager
DATE: November 30, 19xx
RE: Memorandum Format

This is an example of proper memorandum format. Notice that all lines begin at the left margin. The heading information can be single-spaced or double-spaced.

The subject line can be typed in all capital letters or upper and lower case as above. The heading information should be aligned at a tab. After the heading information, a double-space or triple-space should be used to separate the heading from the body of the memo.

Many offices have memorandum letterhead where the headings *TO, FROM, DATE* and *SUBJECT (or RE)* are pre-printed. Memorandums can be printed on plain paper or department letterhead.

Our current *Manual of Style* has been enclosed. I hope you find it helpful when formatting your correspondence.

tlt

Enclosure

Letters

BUSINESS LETTER PARTS

All business letters have the following parts:

Date
Inside address
Salutation
Body
Complimentary close
Writer's name and title
Reference initials

Date

- All letters should have the current date with the month spelled out.
- The date should appear at least a double space below the letterhead. If using NDE letterhead, a top margin of 2" is appropriate. A left margin of 2" and right margin of 1" are also appropriate.
- If the letter is very short, the date may be placed several lines below the letterhead so the letter looks more evenly placed on the page.
- When utilizing blank paper rather than letterhead, the street address and city, state, and zip code of the writer should appear on two lines immediately preceding the date.
- One to four blank lines should appear between the date and inside address.

Inside Address

- The inside address should include the name and full address of the recipient of the letter.
- The inside address provides the information needed to determine the correct salutation to be used.
- Use figures for house and building numbers.
- When numbers 1 through 10 are used as street names, spell them out. *(e.g., 1302 Second Street)*
- When a compass point or direction appears before a street name, spell it out except in a very long address. *(e.g., 330 West 42 Street or 14325 E. Washington Avenue)*
- The ordinal sign *st, d,* or *th* may be omitted as long as a word such as *East* or *West* separates the street number from the building number. If no such word intervenes, use the ordinal sign for clarity. *(e.g., 144 65th Street)*
- Always use the two-letter state abbreviation. For example, Nebraska's abbreviation is **always** NE. See page 56 for a complete listing of state abbreviations.
- If you are writing to an individual, include his/her job title, if known. The title may follow the individual's name or be placed on the line directly below the name, depending on the space available.
- Leave one blank line between the inside address and salutation.
- When using window envelopes, post office regulations requiring all capital letters and no punctuation must be used.

Salutation

- The salutation is often referred to as the greeting of the letter and reflects the degree of formality desired. If you are on a first-name basis with the addressee, the first name may be used in the salutation.

- If you are unsure of the addressee's title, it is permissible to call the addressee's place of business to determine the proper greeting.
- Use the courtesy title "Ms." for a woman unless another title is specified.
- If punctuation is preferred after the salutation, only the colon is acceptable. If the colon is used after the salutation, a comma must be used after the complimentary close. *(mixed punctuation)*
- It is permissible to use no punctuation after the salutation or complimentary close. *(open punctuation)*
- Leave one blank line between the salutation and body of the letter.

Following are several examples of acceptable inside addresses and salutations:

To an individual

Mr. Ted Livingston
Superintendent
Knotts High School
314 Second Avenue
Knotts, NE XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Mr. Livingston

John Brown, Ph.D.
Associate Commissioner
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

Dear Dr. Brown

To a government official

The Honorable J. James Exon
XXX Hart Building
Washington, DC XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Senator Exon

The Honorable Douglas Bereuter
XXX Rayburn Building
Washington, DC XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Congressman Bereuter

The Honorable E. Benjamin Nelson
Governor of Nebraska
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Nelson

The Honorable Jennie Robak
Legislative District #22
State Capitol, Room XXX
Lincoln, NE 68509-4863

Dear Senator Robak

The Honorable Donald Stenberg
Attorney General
P.O. Box 98920
Lincoln, NE 68509-8920

Dear Attorney General Stenberg

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Mayor of Lincoln
555 South Tenth Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Mr. Johanns

To a company or organization

Peed Corporation
Corporate Sales Office
120 West Harvest Drive
Lincoln, NE 68521

Ladies and Gentlemen
or
Dear Colleagues

Miscellaneous examples

Ms. Patricia Johnston
Attorney at Law
Johnston, Johnston & Co.
New York, NY XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Ms. Johnston

Dr. and Mrs. Frank Tremble
1422 Euclid Avenue
Boston, MA XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Tremble

Mr. Tom Petersen
Ms. Pam Stringer
P.O. Box XXX
Waco High School
Waco, TX XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Tom and Pam or
Dear Mr. Petersen and Ms. Stringer

Body

- The body or text of the letter should always be single-spaced with a double space between each paragraph.
- Avoid carrying only one word on a line.
- Always try to have a minimum of two paragraphs in each letter.
- State the purpose of your letter in the first paragraph.
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence.

Complimentary Close

- Place the complimentary close a double space below the last line of the body.
- Recommended complimentary closes include *Sincerely* and *Sincerely yours.*
- As mentioned in the salutation information, the only acceptable form of punctuation to use after a complimentary close is a comma, but only use a comma if a colon is placed after the salutation.
- Capitalize only the first letter of the first word.

Writer's Name and Title

- Type the writer's name on the fourth line below the complimentary close and the title on the following line.
- If a division is included in the signature block, it should follow the writer's title. The following are examples:

Sincerely	*Sincerely yours*	*Sincerely*
Shelly Mavis *Consultant* *Division of Education Services*	*Damian Bostick, Ph.D.* *Director, Special Education*	*Jamie Lee* *Secretary to Thomas Burns*

- Letters should be signed with writer's first and last name.

Reference Initials

- Place the reference initials a double space below the signature block.
- Type the initials in either capital letters or in small letters. When typing two sets of initials, both can be typed the same way for speed and simplicity.
- There are several ways to key reference initials. Following are examples:

Typist only:	*tlt* or *TLT*
Writer and typist:	*dmd/tlt* or *DMD/TLT*
Originator, writer, and typist:	*jel/dcr/ch* or *JEL/DCR/CH*

- Generally, if the writer's name is typed in the signature block, the writer's initials are unnecessary.

Optional Business Letter Parts

There are several optional business letter parts that may be used, depending on the letter. Optional letter parts include the following:

Mailing notation
Attention line
Subject line
Enclosure notation
Copy notation

Mailing Notation

- Mailing notations are seldom used in correspondence today because most mail is sent first class. However, if a mailing notation is used, it should be keyed in all capital letters a double space below the date.
- Examples of special mailing notations include the following: AIRMAIL, REGISTERED, SPECIAL DELIVERY, CERTIFIED, PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.
- On the envelope, the mailing notation is typed a triple-space below the postage stamp or postage meter mark in all capital letters.

Attention Line

- Frequently an attention line is used to route a letter to a particular person when a letter is addressed to a company. The attention line indicates that the letter concerns company business and that the writer prefers that the letter be handled by the individual named in the attention line.
- The attention line is keyed as the second line in the inside address. It may either be spelled out or abbreviated *Attn:*. Note that the salutation agrees with the inside address, **not** the attention line. Following is an example:

  South-Western Publishing
  Attention Donna Jamison
  5101 Madison Road
  Cincinnati, OH 45227

  Ladies and Gentlemen:
- The address on the envelope should appear just as it does in the inside address.

Subject Line

- When a subject line is included, it serves as a title to the body of the letter and should be keyed a double space below the salutation.
- The subject line can be keyed in all capital letters or initial caps. The words *Subject* or *RE* would then be omitted.
- The words *Subject:* or *RE:* may be used with the subject line. Following are examples:

  Subject: National Leadership Conference
  RE: National Leadership Conference

Enclosure Notation

- When additional information is to be enclosed in the envelope with business correspondence, an enclosure notation should be used.
- The enclosure notation is placed a single or double space below the reference initials. Enclosure notations are keyed in a variety of ways:

  Enclosure
  Enclosures: *Invoice*
  Order Form

  Enclosures (2)
  Enc.

Copy Notation

- When copies of a business letter are to be sent to other individuals, a copy notation should be placed a double space below the enclosure notation or reference initials, whichever is last.
- There are several variations in copy notations. The most commonly used notations are *c* (for copy) or *pc* (for photocopy).
- A colon may be used after *c* or *pc* if preferred. Following is an example:

  pc: Tina Burner
  c James Brown

  c: John Doe
  Jane Smith
- If it is unnecessary or inappropriate for the addressee to know that a copy is being sent to another individual, use a blind copy notation on the **copies** only by keying *bc: Shirley West*.

BUSINESS LETTER STYLES

The three basic business letter styles are block, modified block, and simplified. All are acceptable business letter styles.

Block

The block letter style is the most commonly used letter style in business today. All lines begin at the left margin. Note the example on page 12.

Modified Block

The modified block letter is similar to the block letter except the date, complimentary close, and signature lines begin at the center of the page. The first line of each paragraph may begin at the left margin or be indented five spaces. This letter style is not frequently used in business today because of the time it takes to position the date and signature block.

Simplified

The simplified letter format was developed by the Administrative Management Society (AMS). This style may be most appropriately used when addressing several individuals or when in doubt about the gender of the recipient. All lines begin at the left margin. To simplify the keying of this letter, the salutation is omitted and replaced by a subject line keyed in all capital letters. The complimentary close is omitted, and the writer's name and title are keyed in all capital letters on one line. Note the example on page 13.

SAMPLE LETTER
BLOCK LETTER STYLE

November 30, 19xx

Ms. Sandy Greenaway
Superintendent
Calloway Public School
Calloway, NE XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Ms. Greenaway:

RE: Block Letter Style

This letter is typed in the block style. All lines start at the left margin. The block style is rapidly becoming the most frequently used business letter style. Its advantage is that the mechanical process of indenting opening lines, paragraphs and closing lines is eliminated. This practice saves typing time as well as space.

Note that this letter uses mixed punctuation with a colon after the salutation and a comma after the complimentary close. This letter also has optional parts such as the subject line and the copy notation.

As you can see, the block style letter gives good placement appearance. Because many extra typing strokes and motions are eliminated, the use of this letter style does help to increase letter production rates.

Sincerely,

Samuel Dye
Administrator
Division of Education Services

tlt

pc: Sally Live

SAMPLE LETTER
SIMPLIFIED LETTER STYLE

November 30, 19xx

Mrs. Erica Twing
State Farm Insurance
222 South 84 Street
Lincoln, NE 68501

AMS SIMPLIFIED LETTER STYLE

This is an example of the AMS simplified letter style. As you can see, it looks quite attractive on the page. Note the following formatting instructions:

1. Use the block format.

2. Omit the salutation and complimentary close.

3. Always use a subject heading, typed in all capital letters, a double space or triple space below the address. Use the same double or triple spacing after the subject line.

4. Type the writer's name and title in all capital letters on the fourth line below the body of the letter.

5. Key only the typist's reference initials a double space below the writer's name.

Please feel free to adopt this letter style. Our office has found it quite effective. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me.

GEORGIA SMITH, FORMS MANAGER

tlt

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PLACEMENT OF LETTERS

The appearance of correspondence leaving any office is very important. How your letter looks to the recipient—the way it is centered on the page, the use of grammar and punctuation, and the skill with which your message is conveyed—will create an immediate impression of your office.

Letters should be attractively centered on the page. When using Nebraska Department of Education letterhead, top and left margins of 2" are appropriate. WordPerfect users can have their letters automatically centered in the *format* function. Always leave a minimum of one inch for a bottom margin.

It is always a good practice to use a minimum of one-inch left and right margins. The left and right margins can be wider for short letters.

ADDITIONAL PAGES

When a letter extends to a second page, a plain piece of paper of the same quality and color as the original letterhead should be used. The same left and right margins should be used as on the first page. The subsequent pages should begin with an identifying heading which indicates to whom the letter was written, the page number, and date. The first line of the heading should be the same as the first line of the inside address. A one-inch top margin on the second page should be left before beginning the heading. Note the following example:

Mrs. Erica Twing
Page 2
November 30, 19xx

Following the heading, double space and resume keying the body of the letter. Do not divide a paragraph between pages unless at least two lines remain on the first page and at least two lines of the same paragraph begin the second page. Never hyphenate the final word on a page.

Leave a uniform bottom margin of at least one inch at the bottom of all letter pages.

Do not use the second (or last) page of a letter to key only the complimentary close and following lines. A minimum of two lines of the final paragraph should begin the second page.

To shorten a long letter that is not quite long enough to require two pages, the number of blank lines between the letterhead and date or between the date and inside address may be reduced. In addition, single spacing may be used between reference initials, enclosure notations, and copy notations. Selecting a smaller font or reducing the side margins may also shorten the letter sufficiently.

LETTERS FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE

All of the criteria for an acceptable business letter apply to letters keyed for the Commissioner's signature. The standard for any letter sent from the Department of Education should be the same, regardless of the sender. The following points provide important reminders for information specific to the Commissioner's letters:

- Proofreading should be done by more than one person, carefully checking content, spelling, grammar, and appearance on the page.

- Acronyms should be avoided as much as possible. If needed, they should always be spelled out the first time they are used in the document.

- The Commissioner prefers block letter style with mixed punctuation. The closing information is as follows:

  Sincerely,

  JOE E. LUTJEHARMS
  Commissioner of Education

- Use of academic titles is becoming less common. Omitting titles, as on committee lists, provides less opportunity for error and can save time in case the title is not known. The Commissioner seldom uses his academic title.

- Reference initials that indicate the signer, writer, and typist are useful. Following are examples:

  JEL:LV:js
  JEL:DR:ch

LETTERS FOR THE GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

Periodically we receive requests from the Governor's office to prepare a response for the Governor's signature. These requests are always directed to the Commissioner, who then may request staff to prepare a draft response. The draft response should meet all of the previously discussed business letter criteria and contain adequate and appropriate information. The draft response should then be returned to the Commissioner's office for keying and review by the Commissioner before being returned to the Governor's office for signature.

LEGISLATIVE, MEDIA, AND CITIZEN INQUIRIES AND CONTACTS

It is important that information provided by Department staff to state and federal legislative and administrative entities is accurate and consistent with the State Board of Education's positions and objectives. In addition to those entities, staff members may receive inquiries from news media personnel, representatives of groups or associations, or other individuals. See Personnel Policy ED for clarification of Department policies and procedures in these situations.

Mailing Procedures

ENVELOPES AND POSTCARDS

For small mailings or individual letters, envelopes are often used. Envelopes should include the return address of the writer (usually in preprinted form to match the letterhead), the complete address of the person or organization to whom the letter is sent, and any special mailing notations.

According to the United States Postal Service, when addressing envelopes, the entire name and address should be typed in upper case letters (ALL CAPS) approximately 2" from the top of the envelope and 4" from the left edge of the envelope. No punctuation should be used. The nine-digit zip code should be used, whenever known.

The post office will deliver the mail to the line above the city, state, and zip code; therefore, the post office box number or street address should be typed on that line. An apartment number, room, or suite number should appear immediately after the street address on the same line.

Any non-address information such as the six-digit accounting code should be placed above the address lines. The bottom portion of the envelope must be kept clear to allow room for the post office bar coding. An example of an acceptable envelope address is as follows:

13-00-00
MR JOHN DOE
SYRACUSE PUBLIC SCHOOL
1500 EDUCATION DRIVE
SYRACUSE NE XXXXX-XXXX

Addressee notations such as *Personal, Confidential,* and *Hold for Arrival* should be typed in all capital letters a triple space below the return address and three spaces from the left edge.

Mailing notations such as *Registered, Special Delivery,* and *Certified* should be typed in all capital letters a triple space below the postage stamp or postage meter mark.

When using window envelopes, the inside address of the letter must be typed according to the United States Postal Service regulations mentioned above.

When individuals or sections require the creation of business reply postcards, they should seek the services of Public Information and Publications. The Public Information staff will create the postcards with the correct bar code to ensure that the information is accurate and acceptable to the United States Post Office. The correct original postcards will then be referred to the State Print Shop for printing.

LABELS

For larger mailings, it is permissible to adhere address labels to envelopes. There are several different types of labels, such as continuous feed labels, Xerox labels, laser labels, three-across pressure sensitive, and three- and four-across cheshire labels. The address should be attractively typed on the label following United States Postal Service regulations.

Contact the Department of Education Data Center to order pressure sensitive, three- and four-across cheshire labels, for a minimal fee. The Data Center maintains an up-to-date file of all Nebraska Public and Nonpublic School Districts/Systems and their staff, as well as lists for local school board officers, county superintendents, Educational Service Units, Chief State School Officers, Nebraska universities and colleges, Nebraska State legislature, Nebraska newspapers, radios, and television stations. Purchasing the labels from the Data Center will reduce wear and tear on printers and eliminate redundant typing of data. The Data Center can also merge and sort the computerized mailing list with the school mailing list to create one list for large mailings. The Data Center can also provide return address labels which are useful for mailings that require larger envelopes.

BULK MAILINGS

When preparing a bulk mailing, be certain to closely adhere to bulk mailing guidelines. For a fee, the State Print Shop can adhere pressure sensitive and three-across cheshire labels. For a bulk mailing, a printout of the number of labels by zip code must accompany the cheshire labels. Contact the Public Information and Publications section to make arrangements for this service.

Reports

A written report is the final product of many Department of Education activities. Its style, organization, and layout determine whether it is read or put on a shelf.

STYLE

A readable sentence is the foundation of style, and plain English is the foundation of a readable sentence. No matter how educated the reader, plain English is easier to read, takes less time to read, and is less likely to be misunderstood.

Spoken English is the language we use most of the time. It is far different from the bureaucratic or academic language that dominates what we read. Unfortunately, when most people write a report, they use what they read as models, not how they speak. Edward Bailey (in *The Plain English Approach to Business Writing*) poses the following questions:

- Do you normally use words like *commence* instead of *begin*, and *prior to* instead of *before*?
- Do you normally avoid all marks of punctuation except the period and the comma?
- Do you normally avoid any personal pronouns—like *I*, *we*, and *you*?

A bureaucratic writer would respond "yes" to the above questions. To overcome bureaucratic writing, Bailey recommends the following:

- Use ordinary words. Good professionals use ordinary words unless they need something more precise.
- Use a variety of punctuation. Monotone writing is as dull as monotone speaking. Questions that lead to answers are the easiest way to start. Ask the real questions that the report will answer.
- Use more personal pronouns. Good writing involves the reader and leads him or her to action. Using personal pronouns is the easiest way to avoid the passive voice.
- Use contractions (sometimes). Contractions affect the report's tone. For informal writing, it is appropriate to use contractions. For a formal and objective tone, do not use contractions.

The American Psychological Association has developed a manual on the APA Editorial Style. Specific rules regarding spacing, capitalization, headings, illustrations, footnotes, and references are noted in their manual. The APA style can very effectively be used by authors, editors, students, typists, and publishers.

ORGANIZATION

Identify the main purpose of the report. Let the reader see at a glance that the report has an important conclusion, recommends significant actions, or provides useful information.

Academic or bureaucratic writing requires wading through pages of facts, followed by pages of logical reasoning, before conclusions are reached. Many times, people just skip to the end of the report and read the conclusion.

For a short report, an *opening statement* giving the main point in a sentence or two is adequate. For a longer report, an *executive summary* may be needed. What goes into the executive summary? Use the "elevator briefing" test. Suppose you get on the elevator with your boss, and he asks for a quick summary of the progress

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of your project. You have to finish by the time the elevator gets to the sixth floor. What do you tell the boss? That is the executive summary.

For the body of the report, get the words down first, then focus on the style. Standard writing advice is to start with an outline. While written outlines are helpful, personal computers and word processing programs have revolutionized writing. Using an informal (mental) outline of the content and organization, you can write spontaneously and go with the flow of ideas. Good writing means revising. Use the computer's capacity to move blocks of text to revise and reorganize the report.

LAYOUT

The look of the page influences whether someone will read the report. The "Desktop Publishing" section of this manual contains tips on design and style, but the layout of the report should be a top consideration. These three techniques improve layout:

- Use short paragraphs. Short paragraphs isolate separate thoughts so the reader can easily locate each thought and also make the report look appealing by increasing white space and avoiding a mass of solid text.

- Use headings. These are labels for major parts of the report. Headings visually show the report's organization to the reader but also force the writer to organize the report into blocks of information. Three heading styles common to reports are as follows:

  1. Main Headings are centered and typed in all capital letters. The type may be bold-faced.
  2. Side Headings can either be typed in all capital letters at the left margin or typed in upper and lower case letters and underlined.
  3. Paragraph Headings are indented five spaces from the left margin, underlined, and end with a period. The paragraph text then immediately follows the headings.

- Use bullets and indented lists. Reports often contain lists of technical information, steps in procedures, questions, and other kinds of items. Indented lists visually isolate these, and bullets (•) add emphasis. For example:

  Reports often contain lists of:

  - *technical information*
  - *steps in procedures*
  - *questions*
  - *other kinds of items*

News Releases

Department of Education staff who wish to announce events, awards conferred, programs available, grants awarded, or to publicize any other activity or event should contact the Director of Public Information and Publications. The staff member should provide pertinent information in verbal or note form (copies of program agendas also are acceptable notes). The Director will then write a draft of the news release for the originator to review for accuracy.

Following the preparation of a final draft of the news release, the Public Information staff will print the news release on Department of Education News Release letterhead and mail it to an established mailing list of print and broadcast journalists throughout the state. That list includes all daily and weekly newspapers, Omaha and Lincoln broadcast stations, and selected broadcast journalists throughout the state. As much time as possible should be allowed for preparation and distribution of the press release.

In cases where no prior planning is possible and a news release must be quickly conveyed to journalists, the Public Information staff will prepare the release for review and FAX it to a pre-selected list of approximately 25 newspapers and broadcast stations.

Writing for Special Purposes

Data Collection and Reporting

In the mind of the public, government and forms are interchangeable terms. Forms (or other data collection activities) are often the first (and sometimes only) contact a person has with the Department of Education. First impressions are lasting impressions. The form's appearance and ease of completion will shape the recipient's image of NDE.

The Nebraska Education Data Center is responsible for setting standards for all phases of data collection processing and reporting. Administrative Memorandum #602 provides guidelines for NDE staff in the areas of designing and administering data collection activities. Under Memorandum #602, data collection activities are required to be submitted to the Data Center for review and approval. Each approved data collection activity is assigned a control number.

Detailed review criteria are contained in Administrative Memorandum #601, however before developing a data collection activity or when revising an existing activity, consider these basic questions:

- Why is the information needed? Does the form relate to an essential program, purpose, or function?
- Collect only the essential information. Design the form to collect the absolute bare minimum information needed to accomplish the purpose. Does the department already have the information? Consider retrieving existing information from other databases rather than collecting it again. Also consider adding the information needed to an existing form.
- Who fills out the form? Consider electronic transfer or having a clerical worker transfer data from existing records. Avoid the need for professional preparation or prior analysis of data to fill out the form.
- How will the form be completed? Will those who complete it fill it out by hand? Use a typewriter? Use a computer?
- What happens when the information is returned? Who enters it, processes it, reports it, and files it? Do all those who want "file copies" really need them?

After mentally answering these basic questions, consider the format.

Forms usually have four functional parts:

- Identification. Put a title that states its subject and function on every form (such as Training Application, Enrollment Report, or Fund Request). There is no need to use the term "form." That is obvious to the user. If the user is outside of the Department, include the Department, Division, and program identification.
- Instructions. A form should be self instructing. Ideally, the captions for each item provide the user with the help needed to complete the form. If more help is needed, follow these guidelines:
    a. Put general instructions at the top, just below the title, so the user will see them first.
    b. Put instructions specific to a section of the form just above that section. Again, the user will see them when first needed.

c. Put lengthy instructions on the back of the form or on a cover sheet attached to the form.
d. Use simple words and short sentences for instructions. This keeps the reading level at a minimum and helps avoid inaccurate results.

- Body. On most forms, this section has variable data (items filled in by the user), numerical data (rows and columns of tabular information), or both.

- Close. When the form requires a signature, the bottom-right corner is the ideal location. If a specific person (such as the superintendent of a school district) must sign the form, allow enough space for large signatures (about half an inch high and three or four inches long). If the user must mail the completed form, provide the complete return address.

RULES

There are specific formats for rule development and revision. The Legal Counsel's office can offer technical assistance on rule writing. Enhance rule compliance and enforcement by using plain English and following the principles of good writing.

GRANTS

There are two major types of federal grants: formula and discretionary. Formula grants usually involve developing a state plan following a specific content format. Discretionary grants, on the other hand, are usually competitive. Funding depends on the quality of the proposal in relation to the selection criteria for the program. Experienced grant writers provide these tips for writing discretionary grant applications:

- Study the information in the request for proposals (usually in *Federal Register*) and the grant application kit. Be sure the proposal directly responds to the specific priorities and interests mentioned.

- Find out what the federal reviewers will use to score the application. This can be either the selection criteria in the federal regulations or a review form keyed to the regulations. Use the reviewer's selection criteria as the writing outline.

- Fully respond to each of the items in the reviewer's selection criteria. Assume that reviewers know nothing about our state, our education system, or the proposal.

- Ignore the item weights when writing the proposal. Give each item equal attention and effort. Always get the reviewers' comments. Use them to improve the next proposal.

State Board of Education Meetings

State Board Meeting Materials

The materials prepared for monthly State Board of Education meetings are distributed widely inside and outside the Department of Education to Board members, staff, and other interested parties. Those documents, along with the Board meeting minutes, serve as the official record of the Board transactions. As such, they represent the work of the Department of Education to a wide audience and must convey the needed information completely, accurately, and concisely.

The State Board of Education generally meets on the Friday of the first full week of each month except July. Following Board action to approve meeting dates for the upcoming calendar year, a schedule is prepared containing due dates for agenda items and support materials. The dates are set to provide time for organizing and copying the materials and mailing the packets to Board members ten days in advance of the meeting, and at the same time to make the agenda as timely and inclusive as possible. Deadlines are crucial, as the information must move from the initiating staff member, through supervisory levels for review and approval, to division heads for approval, and to the Commissioner for final approval.

Agenda Items

Agenda items are due in the Commissioner's office three weeks before each scheduled meeting. The Board agenda typically includes categories for recognitions, action items, reports, and the Commissioner's Report, which is acted upon as a single item consent agenda. Information submitted for the agenda items must include the following:

- The language that will appear on the actual Board agenda.
- The name of the staff member presenting the item.
- The category of the agenda into which the item should be placed.

Support Materials

Support materials are due in the Commissioner's office two weeks before each scheduled meeting. The support materials must include the following:

- A cover memo on Department letterhead addressed to the Board from the Commissioner, which provides an overview of the pertinent information. In some cases, a memo may provide all of the needed information.
- Additional support material as needed and as appropriate to provide a complete and accurate understanding of the issue involved. When a report involves a lengthy document, a summary should be included.

The documents that make up the support materials must include:

- One single-sided, 8 1/2" x 11" photo-ready copy to be submitted to the Commissioner's office. (Originals will be returned upon request, but they will be marked with consecutive page numbers.)
- Additional copies according the requirements of each division.
- The six-digit code for charging back copying costs to the program originating the agenda item.

COVER MEMO

The cover memo that accompanies Board materials is printed on Department of Education letterhead and includes the following sections. A sample memo appears on the following page.

TO:	State Board of Education
FROM:	Joe E. Lutjeharms, Commissioner of Education
DATE:	(Use the scheduled mailing date.)
SUBJECT:	(This should match the language that appears on the agenda.)
RECOMMENDATION:	It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve . . . (Agenda items with no action requested do not need this section.)
RATIONALE:	(A brief but comprehensive explanation of why requested action is needed. Agenda items with no action requested do not need this section.)
BACKGROUND:	(If the issue has a history, a brief chronology can be inserted here.)
PREVIOUS ACTION:	(Indicate when the Board acted on this or a related issue. Include the original Board action, if possible, and the most recent Board action.)

PRESENTING BEFORE THE BOARD

When presenting an agenda item before the State Board of Education:

- Introduce yourself to the Board by stating your name and position.
- Know who the Board members are and which area of the state they represent.
- Speak professionally, avoiding terms and phrases typically understood only by those already fully familiar with the issue.
- Present the strengths and weaknesses of your request or report.
- Be aware of the impact your agenda item may have throughout the state.
- Be prepared to provide possible solutions to any problems that might arise.
- Offer to secure additional information if the discussion leaves questions unanswered.

SAMPLE BOARD MEMO

TO:	State Board of Education
FROM:	Joe E. Lutjeharms, Commissioner of Education
DATE:	June 12, 1992
SUBJECT:	Department of Education Style Manual
RECOMMENDATION:	It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Nebraska Department of Education Style Manual for use by staff members.
RATIONALE:	The Department of Education employs highly qualified staff members who take pride in serving the public in an efficient and effective manner. The NDE style manual has been developed to suggest procedures that will (1) aid in making that service even more efficient and effective and (2) provide guidelines for uniformity of style in written and spoken communications.
BACKGROUND:	The previous Handbook of Style, prepared by the Department of Education in 1980, is outdated. At the request of Cabinet, a committee of staff members was convened in the summer of 1991 to review standards for printed materials produced by the Department of Education and to create a document that would impart those standards. Following extensive reviewing and rewriting by the committee and subsequent review by additional staff members, the following document was approved by Cabinet in July. Following Board approval, a copy of the document will be made available to each staff member, and workshops will be held to acquaint staff members with the document and its function.
PREVIOUS ACTION:	None

Standards of Style

CAPITALIZATION

Titles of Persons

Capitalize when the title precedes the name. Do not capitalize when the title is a general reference or used in simple apposition following the name.

He talked to Commissioner of Education Joe Lutjeharms.

That is a decision for the director of the department to make.

Exception: Titles of incumbent government officials and important officers of organizations should be capitalized when used in lieu of the person's name.

We were greeted by the Governor and the Attorney General.

We met the Commissioner of Education and his assistants.

The State FBLA Secretary gave the keynote address.

Courses and Subject Areas

Capitalize the titles of specific courses, but do not capitalize references to general academic subject areas (except languages).

He is a student of English literature.

She excelled in algebra and geometry.

The College of Liberal Arts offers work in the following areas: Fine Arts, Mathematical Sciences, Journalism, and Social Work.

He was taking Algebra I and American History II along with his work in sociology.

In references to academic years, do not capitalize the words *freshman*, *sophomore*, *junior*, and *senior*. In references to elementary and high school grade levels, capitalize the word *grade* when a number follows but not when a number precedes.

All incoming freshmen must register by August 20.

Harriett spent her junior year in Germany.

Our oldest child is in Grade 6, our second child is in the third grade, and our youngest is in kindergarten.

Governmental Bodies, State Departments, and Departmental Subdivisions

Capitalize names of major divisions and subdivisions of federal and state government when used in exact or formal reference. Do not capitalize when used in general reference or in adjective form.

the U.S. House of Representatives
the Nebraska Legislature
the Nebraska Department of Education
the Division of Education Services

BUT use this style for general reference:

one of the divisions of our department
one of the legislative or congressional committees
department policy

When the name of a major division or subdivision of government merits capitalization under the above rule, a partial title used in future reference in the same article should also be capitalized.

The State Board of Education met last Friday.
The Board took action on the school proposal.
The Department's policy is quite clear.
The State is a leader in child welfare.

Capitalize recognized regional sections of the country or world. Do not capitalize east, west, north and south when they indicate directions.

Falls City is in southeast Nebraska.
The wind blew from the north.
Trouble in the Near East is in the news media every day.
He got his Harvard accent in the East.

Capitalize the titles of acts, bills, and laws, but do not capitalize the short form used in place of the full name.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990
LB 1059 (Legislative Bill)
LR 150 (Legislative Resolution)
P.L. 94-553 (Public Law)

Academic Degrees

Capitalize when abbreviated. Do not capitalize when written out.

bachelor of science
master of arts
Doctor of philosophy
B.S.
M.A.
Ph.D.

Historic Epochs

Capitalize titles or names given to events or movements that have gained lasting places in history.

the Gay Nineties
the Reformation
the Great Depression
World War II
Desert Storm

BUT not words of general description:

the depression of the 30's
the past century

Holidays

Capitalize names of commonly recognized holidays and special days.

Labor Day
Veterans Day
Good Friday

First Word after Colon

Use of a capital letter following a colon is optional to some extent. The capital letter is more commonly used if the colon is followed by a complete sentence. A lower case letter should be used when the material following is a subordinate element or a simple list of words or phrases.

This is my decision: You will go to Waverly at once.

The following materials should be purchased: pencils, laser cartridges, and laser labels.

Prefixes, Suffixes, and Descriptive Adjectives Used with Proper Nouns

Do not capitalize when used as simple prefixes and suffixes. Capitalize only when usage has given these elements status as parts of proper names or when some other rule requires capitalization.

former Governor Orr
All-American
un-American
Pan-American
Senator-elect Jane Doe

Titles of Articles, Books, etc.

Capitalize all words in titles except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions of fewer than five letters. Capitalize the first and last words of a title, however.

The Last of the Big Spenders
The Wreck of the Hesperus
Learning with Zeal
A Better World To Live In (*To* is capitalized here because it is the infinitive form of the verb. *In* is capitalized because it is the last word in the title.)

Subdivisions of Books

In general, capitalize *chapter, part,* and *section* when used with a number or letter to identify a special subdivision of a book. Do not capitalize when designating a less important subdivision, such as page, paragraph, or sentence.

She will read from Chapter IV of The Scarlet Letter.

I call your attention to paragraph 3 on page 4.

Do not capitalize *chapter, part,* or *section* when used in a general way.

The book contains eight chapters.

PUNCTUATION

Comma

Between Main Clauses

Use commas before conjunctions such as *and, but, for, or, nor,* and *so* when they connect two main clauses in a sentence. Do not use a comma if a conjunction merely connects two verbs or two phrases.

She planned to drive to Scottsbluff, but the weather did not permit her to do so.

He planned to drive to Omaha and take a plane from there.

Items in a Series

Use commas to separate words, phrases, or short clauses in a series. NDE style calls for a comma following the next-to-the-last item in a series. Do not separate two items treated as a single unit within a series.

She took a laptop, an LCD, and a box of materials to the seminar.

He ordered ham and eggs, toast, and coffee.

Occupational fields, engineering, medicine, teaching, etc., were discussed.

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Dates and Addresses

Use a comma to set off day from year and to separate city and state.

The meeting will be held December 1, 19xx, at Lincoln, Nebraska.

The conference was held in Kearney, Nebraska, at the Holiday Inn.

BUT, omit the commas when only the month and year are given.

Please read the article that appeared in the February 1991 issue of "Educational Leadership."

In August 1991 the school districts of Elmwood and Murdock were consolidated.

Colon

A colon is used to introduce a listing or an enumeration:

The Data Center will be installing computers in the following departments:

Marketing Education
Technology Center
Foreign Language Education

The following directors will meet at noon: Danny Jones, Kelly Theis, Susan Huls, and Barry Klein.

A colon may be used after a salutation, but it is not required if open punctuation style is being used.

Dear Dr. Merritt:

A colon may also be used to replace a comma or a semicolon if that which follows the colon either restates or illustrates the preceding idea.

Geniuses are born: they are not made.

The inductive method of teaching helps to satisfy a child: she/he is encouraged to question, to explore, and to discover.

Semicolon

Use a semicolon to separate the members of a compound sentence when the conjunction is not expressed or when the clauses are joined by a conjunctive adverb.

We cannot live on past glory; each day we must strive to improve.

We cannot live on past glory, but each day we must strive to improve.

He did not follow the rule; consequently, he made many serious errors.

Use a semicolon, as a general rule, to separate a series of phrases or clauses (especially if they contain commas) that are introduced by a colon.

Our officers included: President, John Doe; Vice President, Sally Brown; and Secretary, Peter Smith.

Remember to place the semicolon outside the quotation mark; the period, inside.

Ms. Carr spoke on "Building Partnerships"; Mr. Brown, on "Enhancing Self Esteem."

Quotation Marks

The common use of quotation marks is to set off material reproduced in the exact words of a speaker or writer.

John said, "Let's attend the board meeting tomorrow."

"The owner," argued the attorney, "should return the contract."

"Are you for or against us?" asked the chairperson.

BUT quotations containing more than two lines of text are set off from the body of the material by being single-spaced and indented.

Quotation marks may be used to enclose titles of articles, chapters of books, and similar subdivisions of printed works.

Have you read "Book Mark" in Today's Education? Chapter IV, entitled "Fire Power," is very important.

Use quotation marks, rather than italics, for titles of short musical compositions, short poems, plays, brochures, leaflets, unpublished manuscripts, radio programs, and TV programs.

Use quotation marks sparingly to call attention to slang, colloquialisms, or out-of-context words or phrases. Always use a single quotation mark (the apostrophe) to indicate a quotation within a quotation.

"This is a 'hatchet' knot," observed the mechanic.

"I want you to read 'Book Mark' on page 2," said the teacher.

Quotation marks are usually unnecessary after such expressions as *so-called* and *known as*.

Commas and periods are placed inside quotation marks; semicolons and colons are placed outside. Exclamation points and question marks are placed either inside or outside, depending upon the construction and meaning of the sentence. Place inside the quotation mark when it punctuates the quoted matter; place outside the quotation mark when it punctuates the entire sentence.

Did you read the article entitled "Restructuring Today's Schools"?

He shouted, "Run! There's a fire!"

"The report is due today," she said.

Apostrophe

Spacing with the Apostrophe

Do not space before or after the apostrophe within a word. If the apostrophe follows the word, space after (but not before) the apostrophe.

The employee's transportation form had been submitted.

The new employees' reception will be held on Friday.

Formation of Possessive Forms

If a noun (singular or plural) does not end in *s*, form the possessive by adding *'s*.

Singular	Plural
child's	*children's*
man's	*men's*

If a singular noun ends in *s*, add *'s* to form the possessive if the *s* is to be pronounced as an extra syllable. If a singular noun ending in *s* would be awkward to pronounce with an extra syllable, add only the apostrophe to form the possessive.

boss's	*cross's*
waitress's	*species'*

If a plural noun ends in *s*, add only the apostrophe to form the possessive.

bosses'	*refugees'*
managers'	*youngsters'*

To form the possessive of a compound noun, add *'s* to the last word.

runner-up's	*brother-in-law's*

Note: If a compound noun is plural, it is better to avoid the possessive form by rewording the sentence.

homes of the brothers-in-law not *brothers-in-law's homes*

Apostrophe in Nonpossessive Situations

Use the apostrophe to form the past tense or the participle of a coined verb and a symbol.

He OK'd the bill.

When OK'ing the bill, he found an error.

He X'd out the last line.

Use the apostrophe for single quotation marks.

He remarked, "I have read the article 'Food for Thought.'"

Use the apostrophe to indicate the plural form of figures, letters, symbols, and words.

The extra 9's make a difference.

His name is spelled with two r's.

*Use #'s instead of *'s.*

The paragraph contains too many the's.

The workshop will cover restructuring for the 90's.

Dash

Spacing with the Dash

Traditionally on a typewriter, you would type a dash by striking the hyphen key twice without spacing before, between, or after the hyphens. It may be typed at the end of a line, but not carried to the beginning of the next line.

The teacher graded the papers of the top students--Henry, Alice, and Mary--before those of the other students.

BUT an em dash (—) is preferred when using computers. WordPerfect users should consult their WordPerfect manual for further instructions.

The teacher graded the papers of the top students—Henry, Alice, and Mary—before those of the other students.

Hyphen

Spacing with the Hyphen

Do not space before or after the hyphen (except when separating a house number and a street number, as in 127 - 32nd Street.

Uses of the Hyphen

Use the hyphen in compound numerals from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

twenty-one	*one hundred twenty-one*
ninety-nine	*three thousand four hundred eighty-seven*

Use the en dash to indicate a continuous series of numbers. The en dash replaces the word *through*. WordPerfect users should see their WordPerfect manual for further instructions on how to create an en dash.

The students were asked to please read pages 12–36.

Retain the hyphen in a series of hyphenated words having the same ending.

First-, second-, and third-class mail is to be sorted by zip code.

Use the hyphen to join compound adjectives preceding a noun which they modify.

We ordered three reams of 20-pound paper for use in the office.
The self-motivated student excelled in the classroom.

Ellipsis

Use the ellipsis marks to indicate the omission of a word or words from a quotation. Ellipses consist of three periods separated by spaces. It is typed by alternating three periods and spaces or four if the end of a sentence is included in the quotation.

. . . allow time for the report to be photocopied.

If there is a special need . . . adapt your copy to its special purpose.

Poetry is defined as "The embodiment in appropriate language of . . . high thought, imagination, or emotion. . . . and adapted to arouse the feelings and emotions . . . ."

Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose parenthetical or explanatory matter and added information. (Commas or dashes may also be used.)

We are enclosing the contracts (Exhibit A).

Parentheses may be used to enclose enumerated items in a sentence or paragraph.

The important factors are: (1) speed, (2) accuracy, and (3) neatness.

NUMBERS

Spell Out Numbers in the Following Cases:

At the beginning of a sentence

Twenty-three people agreed to attend the meeting.

Whole numbers from one through nine and multiples such as one hundred and three million

They were asked to write six goals for the upcoming year.

The office serves three thousand employees.

Round number of indefinite expression

several thousand people
the Roaring Twenties
between three and four hundred students
in her eighties

Fractions standing alone or followed by *of a* or *of an*

one-fourth inch
two one-hundredths
two-thirds of a workshop
one-half of an educational seminar

Two numbers forming one item

Spell out the shorter of two numbers forming one item.

two 8-foot tables
six 1/2-inch strips
350 ten-gallon cans

Use Figures to Represent Numbers in the Following Cases:

When the number itself is 10 or more

The meeting room will hold 250 people.

The group was transported by 12 buses.

When numbers below 10 occur with larger numbers and refer to the same general subject

The order included 9 reams of paper, 2 toner cartridges, and 24 pencils.

When they refer to parts of a book

The author finished Chapter 9 of her new novel.
The state tax structure is explained in Figure 5.
Please turn to page 89 of your text.
The report included the facts for 1923 in Table 1.

When they precede units of time, measurement, or money

18 years old
75 yards
$2.50
$4 million
2 x 4 inches
8 o'clock
3 hours 30 minutes 12 seconds

Use of Numbers in Special Cases:

Dates in normal order

April 18, 1975, not *April 18th, 1975*
July 4, 1776, not *July 4th, 1776*

Month out of normal order

The report is due the 12th of the month.

The car must be returned by the 11th of December.

Military and foreign dates

In the U.S. military and in certain foreign nations, dates are stated in day-month-year sequence.

22 January 1952

Time

O'clock, a.m., p.m.

Use *o'clock* with spelled-out numbers and *a.m.* or *p.m.* with numerals.

Please visit with the instructor at two o'clock.

The class begins at 8 p.m.

The plane leaves at 8:32 a.m., CST.

BUT for approximations and/or consistency

The show will begin about nine o'clock.

Classes are scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m., 10:15 a.m., and 2:15 p.m.

(When trying to save space, it is technically correct to omit the periods in a.m. and p.m.)

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Military Time

The accounting department requests that employees remember to record departure and arrival times as military time when submitting expense reimbursement documents. By using the 24-hour clock, the need for a.m. and p.m. is eliminated and the colon is dropped.

8 a.m. equals 800 hours
12 noon equals 1200 hours
1:15 p.m. equals 1315 hours
4:30 p.m. equals 1630 hours
12 midnight equals 2400 hours
12 a.m. equals 2400 hours

Percent

Express percentages in figures; spell out the word *percent.*

The bank's prime lending rate dropped to 4.5 percent.

You must receive a 70 percent to pass the exam.

The budget reduction was figured at 17.5 percent.

They can expect a 3½ percent increase in their salaries.

Use figures with symbols and abbreviations

Registration fees will run $25, $26, and $27 respectively.

Over the years, banks have charged 18%, 15%, 12%, and 9%.

WORD DEMONS

The explanations in the following list are merely suggestions to help clarify the meanings. Consult a dictionary to determine finer distinctions.

affect ..... to cause change in something (verb)
effect ..... something brought about by a change (verb or noun)

adapt ..... adjust
adept ..... skilled
adopt ..... choose

accept ..... receive
except ..... exclude

advice ..... counsel (noun)
advise ..... give counsel (verb)

agree to ..... one agrees to a plan
agree with ..... one agrees with a person

aid ..... assist or help
aide ..... assistant or person

all ready ..... completely prepared
already ..... before an understood time

all right ..... the opposite of all wrong, satisfactory
alright ..... not a word

all together ..... everyone in a group
altogether ..... completely

all wrong ..... the opposite of all right
alwrong ..... not a word

any one ..... any person or thing of one group
anyone ..... anybody

anxious ..... nervous
eager ..... looking forward to

assume ..... to take as true without evidence
presume ..... to take as true for a specific reason

assure ..... to make confident
ensure ..... to make certain something happens
insure ..... to buy insurance

bad ..... how one feels physically
badly ..... describes a type of action

beside ..... next to
besides ..... in addition, also

between ..... used with two things or people
among ..... used with three or more things or people

biannual ..... twice a year
biennial ..... every two years

capital ..... the seat of government, a term in finance, capital letter, and capital punishment
capitol ..... the buildings used by Congress and state legislatures

cite ..... quote
sight ..... vision
site ..... location

coarse ..... rough
course ..... plan or class

complement ..... complete
compliment ..... praise

consul ..... foreign representative
council ..... assembly
counsel ..... advice

eligible ..... can be chosen
illegible ..... undecipherable

emigrate ..... to leave a country for residence elsewhere
immigrate ..... to take residence in a country which one is not a native

e.g. ..... for example
i.e. ..... that is

every one ..... each one
everyone ..... everybody

evoke ..... bring out
invoke ..... call upon

farther ..... distance
further ..... advance

fewer ..... can be counted
less ..... cannot be counted

interstate ..... between states
intrastate ..... within one state

its ..... possessive pronoun
it's ..... contraction for *it is*

irregardless ..... not a word
regardless ..... without regard for objections

lay ..... to place something
lie ..... to be placed

loose ..... not secure
lose ..... suffer a loss

may ..... expresses permission
can ..... expresses ability

money ..... The teller handed the customer the money.
monies ..... The registration monies were deposited on May 1.

passed ..... past tense of *pass* (verb)
past ..... gone by (noun, adjective, adverb, preposition)

personal ..... private
personnel ..... the employees

precede ..... go before
proceed ..... go forward or continue

precedence ..... rank
precedent ..... standard
president ..... head

principal ..... chief official or capital sum of money
principle ..... basic truth or fundamental idea

since ..... relation in time
because ..... the reason for something

some time ..... a period of time
sometime ..... an unspecified time
sometimes ..... now and then

stationary ..... fixed, not moving
stationery ..... writing paper

than ..... comparison
then ..... at that time

their . . . . . possessive of pronoun *they*
there . . . . . refers to a place or expletive
they're . . . . . contraction of *they are*

to . . . . . (preposition)
too . . . . . also (adverb)
two . . . . . number following one (adjective or noun)

persecute . . . . . harass, treat unfairly
prosecute . . . . . take legal action through a court

who . . . . . subject
whom . . . . . object

who's . . . . . contraction for *who is*
whose . . . . . possessive

your . . . . . possessive of you
you're . . . . . contraction for *you are*

SIMPLIFIED WORD PHRASES

Official writing does not demand big words or fancy phrases. Write naturally, as if you were speaking. The words you speak with are usually small and often one-syllable words.

Instead of	Try
a number of	several
acknowledge receipt of	thank you for, have received
adequate number of	enough
afford an opportunity	allow, let
all of the	all the
are of the opinion that	believe, think
as a means of	to
as per your request	as you requested
as per your report	according to your report
as prescribed by	under
attached herewith is	here is
at the earliest possible date	give specific date
at the present time	now
at the time	when
awaiting your reply, we are	your assistance will be appreciated
come in contact with	meet
despite the fact that	although
due to the fact that	because, since
during the year 19xx	during 19xx
during which time	while
enclosed please find	enclosed is/are

for example	such as
for the purpose of	for, to
has the capability	can
in accordance with	by, under
in addition	also, besides, to
inasmuch as	since, because
in conjunction with	with
in lieu of	instead of
in order that	for, so
in regard to	about, concerning
in the amount of	for
in the event that	if, in case
in the near future	soon
is unable to	cannot
it is only appropriate	(do not use)
it is recommended	I/we recommend
it is requested	please
no later than May 31, 19xx	before June 1, 19xx
not in a position to	cannot, unable to
on the part of	by
check in the amount of	check for
pertaining to	about
please be advised that	(do not use)
reached an agreement	agreed
subject to	may be

subsequent to ..... after

take appropriate measures ..... please

take into consideration ..... considered

the reason why . . . is because ..... the reason . . . is that

thanking you in advance ..... (do not use)

there are ..... (do not use)

there is ..... (do not use)

totally destroyed ..... destroyed

under separate cover ..... just tell how it will be sent

want/wish to thank you ..... thank you

was in receipt of ..... received

with reference to ..... about

with the exception of ..... except for

Redundant Word Pairs

In each of the following expressions, the word underscored is unnecessary and should be omitted.

continue <u>on</u>
<u>very</u> unique
repeat <u>again</u>
<u>up</u> until
<u>honest</u> truth
<u>over</u> again
<u>very</u> complete
<u>exactly</u> identical
consensus <u>of opinion</u>
refer <u>back</u>
<u>true</u> facts
both <u>alike</u>
seldom <u>ever</u>
<u>advance</u> planning
<u>first</u> began
<u>absolutely</u> free
<u>rightly</u> deserve
<u>necessary</u> requirements

WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

Everyone needs to be aware of the hidden meanings in their choice of words. Some remarks and words can be interpreted to imply that certain groups are superior or inferior to others even though the speaker had no intention of conveying that message. As a result, some people may be offended or feel excluded, and your message may be "tuned out."

References to race, ethnicity, color, gender or disability of a person should be avoided unless it is pertinent to the context of your message.

Word Exchange

Biased	Unbiased
"has led him"	"has led us, has led him/her"
businessman	business manager, executive
chairman	chair/chairperson
Congressman	member of congress, congressional representative
craftsman	craft worker
craftsmanship	artisanship
crippled/handicapped	person with a disability/ people with . . .
deaf and dumb	person with a hearing impairment
delivery boy	deliverer
elderly	senior citizen
female lawyer	lawyer
fireman	fire fighter
fits	seizures
foreman	supervisor, manager
freshman	first-year student
hard of hearing	hearing impaired
housewife	homemaker
John & his wife	John and Jane
ladylike	well-mannered
mailman	letter carrier
man, mankind	people, humanity
man-hours	staff-hours, working hours
manpower	skilled labor, labor force
Men & Ladies	Men & Women
middleman	middle person, intermediary
mongoloid	a person with Down syndrome
mothering	parenting
Mrs. Jones, George	Mary, George
policewoman	police officer
repairman	technician, mechanic, contractor
salesman	sales clerk, salesperson
spokesman	spokesperson
stewardess	flight attendant
The therapist . . . he	Therapists . . . they
women's lib	women's movement

Sentence Exchange

Biased	Unbiased
Be your own man.	Be your own person.
All men are created equal.	All people are created equal.
The labor force needs skilled men.	The labor force needs skilled men and women (or workers).
Ask the girls to type the report.	Ask the secretaries to type the report.
Welcome, ladies and men.	Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome, women and men.
A good mechanic knows his customers.	A good mechanic knows his or her customers. Good mechanics know their customers.
Their son is retarded.	Their son has mental retardation.
This is Mrs. John Brown.	This is Ann Brown. This is Ms. Ann Brown.
John and his wife are homeowners.	John and Ann are homeowners.
Today's young men want opportunities.	Today's young women and men want opportunities.
Infants need a mother's care.	Infants need parental care.
He helps his wife at home.	He and his wife share household duties.
The handicapped people formed an organization.	People with disabilities formed an organization.
Mary is a "black" friend of mine.	Mary is a friend of mine.

When referring to people, the following are generally accepted terms:

African American/black
American Indian/Native American
Mexican American/Hispanic
Chinese American/Asian American
European American/white

Department Procedures

It is vital to any organization, whether public or private, that it maintain a professional, competent, and helpful image. The image of the Department of Education is projected by each of us every time we interact with someone outside the Department, whether by phone, in person, or in writing.

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

The volume of telephone calls received each day provides numerous opportunities to present a professional image. The single most important consideration regarding the telephone is this: How does the handling of this call sound to the person calling?

Critique the calls you make; they will provide you with the best clues to telephone etiquette:

Is anybody there?
Did I call the right number?
Can you help me or find someone who can?
How did I feel at the close of the conversation?

When someone calls the Department of Education . . .

Is anybody there? Yes, if the person called is at his/her desk or has forwarded his/her phone to someone who knows where he/she is and when he/she will return.

Did the caller call the right number? Yes, and the caller will know that immediately if the person answering says, "Nebraska Department of Education," followed by the name of the office and his/her name.

Can we help them or find someone who can? Yes, if we are all informed as to others' job responsibilities and areas of expertise or if we know where to get that information.

How does the caller feel at the close of the conversation? That is up to each employee.

Tips for Telephone Etiquette

- When putting a call through to someone in your office say: "Thank you, I will connect you," not, "I'll transfer you." The latter statement may imply the caller dialed the wrong number.
- When you "call forward" to another person's phone, notify that person you are doing so.
- Develop procedures within your office that cover receiving calls while meeting with someone, interrupting with calls that are expected and/or critical, and taking messages.
- Develop a standard answer. The shortest and best seems to be: "Department of Education, (office), (name), how may I help you?"
- Identify yourself when placing a call, using your first and last names for most business purposes.

- To cut down on transfers, offer to take a message, locate the appropriate person to return the call, and see that he/she has all the information you can provide to help him/her respond efficiently.
- Try to avoid non-businesslike expressions such as "You know," or "Bye-bye."
- Minimize or eliminate personal calls.
- Familiarize yourself with the telephone system. Fumbling with a phone procedure can be distracting to the caller, can waste your time, and could lose the call.
- Know the whereabouts of others in your area if possible. This will avoid unnecessary transfers or having to put the caller on hold.
- When answering for another person who is too far away from the desk to receive the call, simply say, "She/he is away from her/his desk; how may I help you?"
- Familiarize yourself with the Department so you can be helpful when a call needs to be transferred.
- Maintain professionalism. You are a representative of the Nebraska Department of Education.

(Adapted from Office Procedures Manual, Lincoln Public Schools)

Receiving Visitors to the Department of Education

Visitors to the Department of Education receive their first impression as they get off the elevators and stop at the receptionist's desk, and first impressions do count in this high traffic area. The receptionist is prepared to greet your visitors, let you know they are here, and direct them to your office or ask you to come to the desk and meet them, as appropriate. With adequate information as to the name of the meeting, the receptionist is also prepared to direct your visitors to the correct conference room.

Arranging for Meetings

The schedule for Department conference rooms is kept by the receptionist, and the person on duty at the desk will be happy to reserve a conference room for you, or to assist you by calling the Department of Administrative Services to secure a conference room elsewhere in the event all available Department meeting space is already reserved. If your meeting is canceled, notifying the receptionist immediately will free the room for others.

Conference rooms, for the most part, can be rearranged to suit the meeting needs of your group, but must be left in order for the next group. That includes seeing that all trash is in trash cans, cleaning off tables, erasing the chalkboard or dry erase board, and removing any other miscellaneous supplies or equipment used for the meeting. There is no cleaning service available except for emptying waste baskets and vacuuming floors.

With the exception of "working lunches," which must meet strict Department of Administrative Services criteria for payment, no provisions exist for providing food or beverages of any type for meetings. Food and beverages are permitted if the individuals involved choose to pay personally for them.

If you have need for media equipment, arrangements must be made with the Public Information and Publications Section as far in advance of the meeting date as possible.

Records Management

Like other state agency directors, the Commissioner of Education is responsible for appointing a Records Officer who by statute, is responsible for:

- inventory of the Department of Education's records
- preparation of the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule(s).
- revision and update of these schedule(s).
- establishment of a program to make the agency's recordkeeping efficient and economical.

Records Retention Schedule

The Records Retention Schedule is an inventory of all record systems in the custody and care of the Department of Education. The schedule describes each system and identifies the length of time records will be retained within the agency. The Department of Education has been assigned Schedule 39 by the Nebraska Records Management Division, an office within the Secretary of State's Office. In addition, department staff may have occasion to refer to the following schedules:

Schedule 13 - County Superintendent of Schools
Schedule 10 - Local Education Agencies
Schedule 124 - State Agencies - General Reports

Definition of a Record

Legally, **a record is** defined as books, documents, papers, photographs, microfilm, sound recordings, magnetic storage medium or anything else that contains information in any form that directly relates to the function of an agency.

Generally, any information that does not document the activity of the Department of Education is **not considered a record**. For example:

- Library or museum material that is just for reference or exhibition.
- Extra copies of documents kept just for convenience or reference.
- Stock of publications, or other printed material kept just as supplies. Note, however, that agencies must send four copies of all publications to the Nebraska Library Commission.
- Extra copies of circulated material of which official copies are kept for the record.
- Reading files and follow-up correspondence copies.
- Identical or carbon copies of documents of which the final version is complete.
- Letters of transmittal that add nothing to the transmitted information.
- Interoffice memoranda.
- Shorthand notes, stenotype tapes, or sound recordings after they have been transcribed.
- Internal housekeeping materials, like intraoffice memos, routing slips, and computer edit error listings after the corrections are made.

Nebraska Department of Education Contact

The current Records Officer for the Nebraska Department of Education is Bob Beecham, Administrator for the Education Data and Research Center. Questions about Schedule 39 should be addressed to the Data Center.

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Desktop Publishing

The following tips are not intended as a comprehensive course in desktop publishing, but will provide some fundamentals to make publications look more professional.

There are no absolutes in graphic design. Layout that works in one instance will not necessarily work in another. Success is based on coordinating text and art, accurately judging proportion so that art and text seem to "belong together," and deciding whether or not the choices you make achieve the publication's purpose.

The size of the page, the size and character of the type, the size of the art, and their interrelationship all contribute to whether or not a layout works. Even the most untrained eye can usually detect something wrong in graphic design. Figuring out what works is as much a function of time and experimentation as anything else.

Elements of Desktop Publishing

Style is a natural product of the way each user accomplishes a pleasing layout. It is based on choices that achieve the desired effect; it evolves out of practice and experience.

Balance is the way each page of the publication is arranged. Perfectly balanced pages are boring and cause the reader's eyes to skip around in interrupted eye movements. Tension adds interest to a page and keeps the reader's attention. Unequal left/right or top/bottom balance creates tension which helps move the eyes around a page. Tension can be created by using white space around text or art.

Unity occurs when the page is organized around a single dominant visual element of art. It provides a focal point and resting spot for the reader's eyes before he/she begins traveling around the page. It also helps to avoid the cluttered look that occurs when the page contains an unorganized series of equal-sized text or art elements.

Spreads are two facing pages and are important because readers usually view two pages at a time. By concentrating design efforts on two facing pages, one avoids a two-page spread that is not unified. Wearing plaid slacks and a print shirt sometimes works, but not very often.

Margins isolate the designed pages from surrounding borders and provide the space necessary to highlight important information. Always indent text, headlines, chapter titles and page numbers the same distance from the top, bottom and sides of a page throughout a publication. There are practical reasons for margins, as well. Wide inside margins are appropriate if printing on both sides of a page. They also allow room for binding or three-hole punching, if that is necessary.

Borders can be used to frame pages. Border lines help create and strengthen the identity of a publication. Borders don't have to extend the full width of a page to be effective. Less than full-page borders tend to create an informal or less classical, more contemporary appearance.

Columns are used for newspapers, but can be used for newsletters and other publications. Wide columns are used for large type sizes and narrower columns for small type. Columns do not have to be the same width. Headlines and subheads can be arranged in narrow columns that introduce the body of text contained in wider columns. Use justified columns to add formality and save space. Use unjustified columns (flush left/ragged right) to create more informal, easy-to-read publications.

Headers and Footers are information in the top and bottom margins of each page that help readers locate specific information, identify chapters, repeat the publication title, or repeat the name of the publication author. Headers (also called running heads) are at the top of the pages; footers often contain page numbers and are at the bottom of the page. Page numbers can be placed either place and sometimes are alternated between headers and footers.

Type helps to create a personality, style, and expressiveness for any publication because each typeface "speaks" in a different tone. The typefaces you select for headlines and body of text definitely affect the way readers experience or interpret your ideas. The basic rule is that if you are using typeface that draws attention to itself, the reader may lose the importance of the message you are attempting to convey. Some typefaces are so unusual or "cutesy" that if you are conveying information, instructions, or other more serious material, the typeface will detract from the gravity of the message.

Different typefaces have different weights. Thick or bold typefaces used in small areas add to the contrast, balance, and tension of the page. Thinner typefaces open up the page, giving the elements more room to breathe. There are two categories of type: serif and sans serif. Serif type is characterized by tiny cross-lines (or feet) at the ends of the main letter strokes. Serif type is ideal for text because the cross-lines help make an easier letter-to-letter transition for the reader's eyes. Sans serif type is more simplistic and straightforward and is better for headlines and subheadings.

It is a good idea not to mix too many typefaces on a page. Confusion, rather than variety, usually greets the reader whose eyes are trying to deal with too many types on one page. However, changing the appearance of a page by mixing upper case and lower case, using italicized or bold variations of the same type face can create a variety of "looks" and often fools readers into believing they are seeing more than one typeface. Whatever you choose, be consistent in your choice of typefaces for headlines, subheadings, text and captions.

A **masthead** identifies the publication (such as a newspaper) and is different from headlines or any other larger or bolder type in the publication. The masthead is usually the dominate feature of the first page and gives it consistency from issue to issue; a headline invites readers to focus on particular topics. Since the masthead and headlines perform different functions, neither should dominate the other.

Headlines not only communicate and emphasize information, but provide strength of design for any publication. They should be large enough for easy reading and constructed to provide focus for each page without competing with other elements on the page. Headlines can be centered, flush left, or flush right, depending on how the headline relates to the text and art or photos on the page. Using both upper and lower case type in headlines makes them easier to read, but in headlines of just a few words, the use of upper case only is acceptable.

Subheads enlarge on headlines, lead readers through the body of the text, and make it easier for readers to find relevant information in the body of the text. White space, rules, and graphic techniques also can be used with subheads to strengthen their impact and create a distinct appearance for a page. Subheads should be used only when an important new topic is introduced.

Captions are used to describe how photos and art support the text. They should be short, to the point, and set in small type so they don't compete with the text. Since captions are almost always read, they provide an opportunity to summarize important points made in the text. They should be set in the same type, size, and style throughout a publication and placed below, above, or next to a photo or art/illustration.

Color gives a publication a distinct look and can be used in a number of ways. Colored ink can highlight borders, rules, or headlines. Colored paper can help "dress up" a publication, as long as you are careful to choose a color on which the ink printing is clearly readable. Using different colors to compartmentalize sections of a publication is a way of adding visual organization to each page. Be sure to choose colors that reflect the message you intend to communicate. Bright colors indicate excitement; subdued colors add dignity. Color loses impact when it is overused, so be selective.

Type size and type faces should reflect the importance of various parts of a publication. Headlines should be larger than subheads; subheads, larger than text; text, larger than captions and footnotes. Emphasis can be added to pages by setting headlines, subheads, and text in variations of the type normally used. **Boldface type** is authoritative. *Italic type* adds emphasis in a less authoritative way. It provides a more refined or elegant mood and also can be used to convey irony and humor. ***Bold italic type*** gives a sense of action.

White space provides a background that emphasizes whatever it surrounds. Pages should be framed in white space. White space in the middle of a page creates unsightly "holes" and leads to an unfinished look. You can add emphasis to headlines by surrounding them with white space, which separates them from surrounding text and art and makes them easier to read.

Boxes can be used to draw attention to text that would otherwise be lost in its surroundings. Words can be boxed, but so can photos and art/illustrations. Boxes can be screened (shades of gray or a light color) to add extra emphasis.

Photographs, art, illustrations and charts/graphs communicate important ideas at a glance and add visual variety to a publication. They also make a publication more "human" and personal to readers. Be sure to crop photos so that the most important elements in them are emphasized. Illustrations/art can be as literal or as abstract as the author desires and can be used as the dominant visual element on a page or as background for headlines and text. However, photos, art, and illustrations should communicate the same message as the text or they will confuse the reader and detract from the publication. Charts and graphs clarify and simplify numbers for readers; they help statistics and facts make sense and make connections among series of numerical concepts. They are especially helpful when comparing data.

Pull quotes are short quotations from the text of an article that are used as a graphic device, especially when no photos or art are available. Pull quotes summarize surrounding material and draw attention to it. Pull quotes can be set in large type or boxed to draw attention to them and can be positioned anywhere on a page that creates the effect that works.

Leading is the adjustment of vertical spacing between lines of type. Proper leading ensures that the bottoms of letters in one line do not touch the tops of letters in the next line. Too much vertical spacing causes lines not to relate well to each other and makes them more difficult to read. Tightening up the leading conserves space and improves both the appearance and the readability of a publication. When adjustments in leading are made, care should be taken not to inadvertently draw attention to one part of a publication at the expense of another. The leading used for each element of text should be the same throughout the publication.

Kerning refers to adjustments made in the spaces between letters. Kerning eliminates the unnaturally large spaces that often occur between certain letter pairs, such as an upper case T or Y next to a lower case a, i, or o, by bringing these letters together. This type of kerning creates a more unified appearance. Kerning also can be used to expand a headline without increasing its height by increasing the spaces between letters. This reduces the emphasis of the headline by making it appear lighter in weight.

Acronyms

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language
ADA	American Dietetics Association
ASFSA	American School Food Service Association
AVA	American Vocational Association
CAAP	Civic Achievement Award Program
CADKEY	Computer Assisted Drafting
CAYA	"Come As You Are" Booklets
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
CEAN	Cooperative Education Association of Nebraska
CNP	Child Nutrition Programs
CWEEA	Cooperative Work Experience Education Association
DECA	An Association of Marketing Students
ESEA	Elementary & Secondary Education Act (Chapter 2)
ESL	English as a Second Language
EVO	Equal Vocational Opportunity
FBLA	Future Business Leaders of America
FFA	Future Farmers of America
FHA	Future Homemakers of America
GED	General Education Development
GESA	Gender/Ethnic Expectations Student Achievement
HOSA	Health Occupations Students of America
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
M-PBEA	Mountain Plains Business Education Association
MAC	Math Appreciation Camp
N-ABELS	Approval & Accreditation
NABESS	National Association of Business Education State Supervisors
NACD	Nebraska Association for Counseling & Development
NAECS	National Association of Early Childhood Spec
NASB	Nebraska Association of School Boards
NATM	Nebraska Association of Teachers of Mathematics
NBEA	National Business Education Association
NCA	North Central Association
NCIS	Nebraska Career Information System (at UN-L)
NCLI	Nebraska Committee for Literacy Initiatives
NCSA	Nebraska Council of School Admininistrators
NEAEYC	Nebraska Association for Education of Young Children
NET	Nutrition Education Training
NHEA	Nebraska Home Economics Association
NICC	Nebraska Interagency Coordinating Council
NSAA	Nebraska School Activities Association
NSD	Nebraska School for the Deaf
NSVH	Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped
NSEA	Nebraska State Education Association
NSLP	National School Lunch/Breakfast Program

NVA	Nebraska Vocational Association
NVCRC	Nebraska Vocational Curriculum Resource Center
NVHETA	Nebraska Vocational Home Economics Teachers Association
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
PBL	Phi Beta Lambda
PLUS TASK FORCE	Project Literacy United States
RDU	Research Development Unit
REACH	Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Council
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SLIAG	State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant
TEK	Technology, Education, Kids Camp
VICA	Vocational Industrial Clubs of America
VSO	Vocational Student Organizations

Proofreader's Marks

Proofreader's Mark	Meaning	As used in text	After change
cap or	capitalize	new york	New York
	close up space	win ter	winter
	delete	leave out the	leave the
	insert word	leave the	leave out the
	insert punctuation	to the school and	to the school, and
/ or lc	lowercase	the Summer session	the summer session
sp or	spell out	wouldn't run	would not run
stet or	let stand	famous well-known	famous well known
	move left	move left	move left
	move right	move right	move right
	paragraph	The first line and the second	The first line and the second
	transpose	is it so	it is so
	insert space	thespace	the space

Two-Letter State Abbreviations

Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
California	CA	New Jersey	NJ
Colorado	CO	New Mexico	NM
Connecticut	CT	New York	NY
Delaware	DE	North Carolina	NC
District of Columbia	DC	North Dakota	ND
Florida	FL	Ohio	OH
Georgia	GA	Oklahoma	OK
Guam	GU	Oregon	OR
Hawaii	HI	Pennsylvania	PA
Idaho	ID	Puerto Rico	PR
Illinois	IL	Rhode Island	RI
Indiana	IN	South Carolina	SC
Iowa	IA	South Dakota	SD
Kansas	KS	Tennessee	TN
Kentucky	KY	Texas	TX
Louisiana	LA	Utah	UT
Maine	ME	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virgin Islands	VI
Massachusetts	MA	Virginia	VA
Michigan	MI	Washington	WA
Minnesota	MN	West Virginia	WV
Mississippi	MS	Wisconsin	WI
Missouri	MO	Wyoming	WY

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Proofreader's Marks

Proofreader's Mark	Meaning	As used in text	After change
cap or	capitalize	new york	New York
	close up space	win ter	winter
	delete	leave out the	leave the
	insert word	leave the	leave out the
	insert punctuation	to the school and	to the school, and
/ or lc	lowercase	the Summer session	the summer session
sp or	spell out	wouldn't run	would not run
stet or	let stand	famous well known	famous well known
	move left	move left	move left
	move right	move right	move right
	paragraph	The first line and the second	The first line and the second
	transpose	is it so	it is so
	insert space	thespace	the space

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